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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION
OPPOSITION TO LD 1992:

"AN ACT TO BROADEN ELIGIBILITY FOR DISABLED VETERANS LICENSE PLATES"

Senator Diamond, Representative McLean, and members of the Committee on Transportation, my name is Andy Cutko and I am the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I am testifying in opposition to LD 1992.

While the Bureau shares an interest in supporting Maine's disabled veterans, the ramifications of this bill could have a substantial impact on our State Park system, both in terms of Park general fund revenue and added work load to our reservations team. State Park visitation has been at an all-time high in recent years, but funding to address long-overdue State Park infrastructure improvements is currently lacking, and this bill could further contribute to that significant funding shortfall.

The Bureau of Parks and Lands recognizes the importance and personal value of access for disabled veterans to our State Park system. Our Parks offer places to connect with family and relax and recreate in some Maine's most beautiful locations. We currently support active duty personnel and veterans, including those with 100% disabilities, with a variety of benefits at State Parks (see attachment). If this bill moves forward to include veterans with 50+% disabilities, it could have the following impacts:

- First, while the specific fiscal impact is difficult to quantify, using certain assumptions based on numbers from the Bureau of Veteran's Services, the lost general fund revenue from day use could exceed \$1.2 million, and the lost revenue from camping could exceed \$2.4 million. Even if new license plates were capped at 2,000, as currently stated in the bill, lost revenue could exceed \$600,000.
- Second, disabled veteran's average stay is typically much longer than paying customers, and there is the potential that additional use by this population may adversely impact availability of campsites for other, paying customers – particularly at our heavily used campgrounds like Sebago Lake and Camden Hills.
- Third, because the state's on-line reservation system cannot accommodate free use, all 100% disabled veterans making campground reservations must use our call center. As a result, this change could substantially increase the work load in the call center, and that increase may require additional staffing.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns, and I'll be glad to address any questions.

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MAINE RESIDENTS ONLY	DAY USE	SHELTER RESERVATION FEES	FAMILY CAMPING	GROUP CAMPING
100% Maine Disabled Veteran <ul style="list-style-type: none"> DV License Plate, or; Letter from DMV 	<p><u>100% DV, Spouse and unmarried children are exempt from fees.</u></p> <p><i>All others in vehicle are subject to regular day use entrance fees. DV must be present. This can be verified by matching the name on the DV's ID with the vehicle's registration.</i></p>	<p><u>100% DV, Spouse and unmarried children in Group are exempt from fees.</u></p> <p><i>Members of the group that are NOT DVs are responsible for the reservation fee and subject to all regular day use fees. Note: Reservation fee must be received within 10 days to complete reservation.</i></p>	<p><u>100% DV, Spouse and unmarried children</u> are exempt from reservation and camping fees.</p> <p>State Parks Rules dictate no more than 6 individuals on a family site. DV must be present for the duration of the trip.</p>	<p><u>Only 100% DVs in Group are exempt from reservation and camping fees.</u></p> <p><i>When a DV makes a group camping reservation, his/her DMV letter must be faxed or mailed in.</i></p> <p><i>If the group is comprised of only DVs, then all fees will be waived upon presentation of their DMV letters.</i></p> <p><i>Members of group that are NOT DVs are responsible for the reservation fee and subject to all regular group camping fees.</i></p>
Veteran <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass issued from Bureau of Veteran Services or new veteran drivers license. No expiration date on pass 	<p><u>Veteran only exempt from fees.</u> <i>All others in vehicle are subject to regular day use entrance fees. Pass holder must be present.</i></p>	<p><u>All Qualified Vets in Group are exempt from fees.</u> <i>All others in party are subject to the shelter reservation and day use fees. Note: Reservation fee must be received within 10 days to complete reservation.</i></p>	<p>No Exemptions for camping</p>	<p>No Exemptions for camping</p>
Active Duty Personnel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pass issued from Bureau of Veteran Services Pass valid for 12 months (Staff must check expiration dates) (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, & deployed, full time, National Guard) 	<p><u>Active Duty Personnel, Spouse and unmarried children are exempt from fees.</u> <i>All others in vehicle are subject to regular day use entrance fees. Pass holder must be present in vehicle.</i></p>	<p><u>All Qualified Active Duty Personnel in Group are exempt from fees.</u> <i>All others in party are subject to the shelter reservation and day use fees. Note: Reservation fee must be paid within 10 days to complete reservation.</i></p>	<p>No Exemptions for camping</p>	<p>No Exemptions for camping</p>